

THE PALE DICE-THROWER.

Hunger is most poignant when it has forced physical suffering to the highest point without impairment of the mental functions. Thus hungry happened to be Joseph Carringer, a young man of uncommonly high spirit, who found himself a total stranger in San Francisco upon a rainy evening in November. There remained in his possession not a thing that he might have pawned for a morsel to eat; and even as it was, he had stripped his body of all articles of clothing except those which a remaining sense of decency compelled him to retain. Hence it was that cold assailed him and conspired with hunger to complete his misery. Having been brought into the world and reared a gentleman, he lacked the courage to beg and the knowledge to steal. This means to say that he had a finely constituted organization, sensitive and proud, to the last degree, and accordingly altogether out of place in the world. Had not an extraordinary thing occurred to him, he either would have drowned himself in the bay within twenty-four hours, or died of pneumonia in three days. For he had been seventy hours without food, and his mental desperation had driven him far in its race with his physical needs to consume the strength within him; so that now, pale, weak, and tottering, he took what comfort he could find in the savory odors which came steaming up from the basement kitchens of the restaurants in Market Street, caring more to gain them than to avoid the rain. His teeth chattered; his eyes had dark circles under them; he shambled, stooped, and gasped. He was too desperate to curse his fate—he could only long for food. He could not reason; he could not reflect; he could not understand that ten thousand hands might gladly have fed him; he could think only of the hunger which consumed him, and of food that could give him warmth and happiness.

When he had arrived at Mason Street, he saw a restaurant a little way up that thoroughfare, and for that he beaded, crossing the street diagonally. He stopped before the window and ogled the steaks, thick and lined with fat; his oysters lying on ice; slices of ham as large as his hat; whole roasted chickens, brown and juicy; and many other things. He ground his teeth, groaned, and staggered on.

A few steps beyond was a drinking-saloon, which had a private door at one side, with the words "Family Entrance" painted thereon. In the recess of the door (which was closed) stood a man. In spite of his agony, Carringer saw something in this man's face that appalled and fascinated him. Night was on, and the light in the vicinity was dim; but it was clear that the stranger had an appearance of whose character he himself must have been ignorant. Perhaps it was the unspeakable anguish of it that struck through Carringer's sympathies. The young man came to an uncertain halt and stared at the stranger. At first, he was unseem, for the stranger looked straight out into the street with singular fixity, and the death-like pallor of his face added a weirdness to the immobility of his gaze. Then he took notice of the young man.

"Ah," he said, slowly and with peculiar distinctness, "the rain has caught you, too, without overcoat or umbrella. Stand in this doorway—there is room for two."

The voice was not unkind, though it had an alarming hardness. It was the first word that had been addressed to the sufferer since hunger had made him a victim, and to he spoken to at all, and have his comfort considered in the slightest way, gave him cheer. He entered the embrasure and stood beside the stranger, who at once relapsed into his fixed gaze at nothing across the street. But presently the stranger stirred himself again.

"It may rain a long time," said he; "I am cold, and I observe that you tremble. Let us step inside and get a drink."

He opened the door and Carringer followed, hope beginning to get a warm hand upon his heart. The pale stranger led the way into one of the little private booths with which the place was provided. Before sitting down, he put his hand into his pocket and drew forth a roll of bank-hills.

"You are younger than I," he said; "won't you go to the bar and buy a bottle of absinthe, and bring a pitcher of water and some glasses? I don't like for the waiters to come around. Here is a twenty-dollar bill."

Carringer took the bill and started down through the corridor toward the bar. He clutched the money tightly in his palm; it felt warm and comfortable, and sent a delicious tingling through his arm. How many glorious hot meals did that bill represent? He clutched it tighter, and hesitated. He thought he smelled a broiled steak, with fat little mushrooms and melted butter in the steaming dish. He stopped and looked back toward the door of the booth. He saw that the stranger had closed it. He could pass it, slip out the door, and buy something to eat. He turned and started, but the coward in him (there are other names for this) tripped his resolution; so he went straight to the bar and made the desired purchase. This was so unusual that the man who served him looked sharply at him.

"Ain't goin' to drink all of that, are you?" he asked.

"I have friends in the box," replied Carringer, "and we want to drink quietly and without interruption. We are in Number 7."

"Oh! beg pardon. That's all right," said the man.

Carringer's step was very much stronger and steadier as he returned with the liquor. He opened the door of the booth. The stranger sat on the side of the little table, staring at the opposite wall just as he had stared across the street. He wore a wide-brimmed, slouch hat, drawn well down. It was only after Carringer had set the bottle, pitcher, and glasses on the table, and seated himself opposite the stranger and within his range of vision, that the pale man noticed him.

"Oh! you have brought it? How kind of you! Now please lock the door."

Carringer had slipped the change into his pocket, and was in the act of bringing it out, when the stranger said:

"Keep the change. You will need it, for I am going to

get it back in a way that may interest you. Let us first drink, and then I will explain."

The pale man mixed two drinks of absinthe and water, and the two drank. Carringer, unsophisticated, had never tasted the liquor before, and he found it harsh and offensive; but no sooner had it reached his stomach than it began to warm him and send the most delicious thrill through his frame. He had heard of the absinthe-drinkers of Paris, and he wondered no longer at the deadly fascination which the liquor throws about its victim—not realizing that his extreme weakness and the emptiness of his stomach made him particularly susceptible to its effects.

"It will do us good," said the stranger; "presently we shall have more. Meanwhile, do you know how to throw dice?"

Carringer weakly confessed that he did not.

"I thought not. Well, please go to the bar and bring a dice-box. I would ring for it, but I don't want the waiters to come in."

Carringer fetched the box, again locked the door, and the game began. It was not one of the simple old games, but had complications in which judgment, as well as chance, played a part. After a game or two without stakes, the stranger said:

"You now seem to understand it. Very well—I will show you that you do not. We will now throw for a dollar a game, and in that way I shall win the money that you received in change. Otherwise I should be robbing you, and I imagine you can not afford to lose. I mean no offense. I am a plain spoken man, but I believe in honesty before politeness. I merely want a little diversion, and you are so kind-natured that I am sure you will not object."

"On the contrary," replied Carringer, "I shall enjoy it."

"Very well; but let us have another drink before we start. I believe I am growing colder."

They drank again, and this time the starving man took his liquor with relish—at least it was something in his stomach, and it warmed and delighted him.

The stake was a dollar a side. Carringer won. The pale stranger smiled grimly, and opened another game. Again Carringer won. Then the stranger pushed back his hat and fixed that still gaze upon his opponent, smiling yet. With this full view of the pale stranger's face, Carringer was more appalled than ever. He had begun to acquire a certain self-possession and ease, and his marveling at the singular character of the adventure had begun to weaken, when this new incident threw him back into confusion. It was the extraordinary expression of the stranger's face that alarmed him. Never upon the face of a living being had he seen a pallor so death-like and chilling. The face was more than pale—it was white. Carringer's observing faculty had been sharpened by the absinthe, and, after having detected the stranger in an absent-minded effort two or three times to stroke a beard which had no existence, he reflected that some of the whiteness of the face might be due to the recent shaving of a full beard. Besides the pallor, there were deep and sharp lines upon the face, which the electric light brought out very distinctly. With the exception of the steady glance of the eyes and an occasional hard smile, that seemed out of place upon such a face, the expression was that of stone inartistically cut. The eyes were black, but of heavy expression; the lower lip was purple; the hands were fine, white, and thin, and black veins hulged out upon them. The stranger pulled down his hat.

"You are lucky," he said. "Suppose we try another drink. There is nothing like absinthe to sharpen one's wits, and I see that you and I are going to have a delightful game."

After the drink, the game proceeded. Carringer won from the very first, rarely losing a game. He became greatly excited. His eyes shone; color came to his cheeks. The stranger, having exhausted the roll of hills which he first produced, drew forth another, much larger and of higher denominations. There were several thousand dollars in the roll. At Carringer's right hand were his winnings—something like two hundred dollars. The stakes were raised, and the game went rapidly on. Another drink was taken. Then fortune turned the stranger's way, and he won easily. It went back to Carringer, for he was now playing with all the judgment and skill he could command. Once only did it occur to him to wonder what he should do with the money if he should quit winner; but a sense of honor decided him that it belonged to the stranger.

By this time the absinthe had so sharpened Carringer's faculties that the temporary satisfaction which it had brought to his hunger having passed, his physical suffering returned with increased aggressiveness. Could he not order a supper with his earnings? No; that was out of the question. He continued to play, while the manifestations of hunger took the form of sharp pains, which darted through him viciously, causing him to writhe and grind his teeth. The stranger paid no attention, for he was now wholly absorbed in the game. He seemed puzzled and disconcerted. He played with great care, studying each throw minutely. No conversation passed between them now. They drank occasionally, the dice continued to rattle, the money kept piling up at Carringer's hand.

The pale man began to behave strangely. At times he would start and throw back his head, as though he were listening. For a moment his eyes would sharpen and flash, and then sink into heaviness again. More than once Carringer, who had now begun to suspect that his antagonist was some kind of unearthly monster, saw a frightfully ghastly expression sweep over his face, and his features would become fixed for a very short time in a peculiar grimace. It was noticeable, however, that he was steadily sinking deeper and deeper into a condition of apathy. Occasionally he would raise his eyes to Carringer's face after the young man had made an astonishingly lucky throw, and keep them fixed there with a steadiness that made the young man quail.

The stranger produced another roll of hills when the second was gone, and this had a value many times as great as the others together. The stakes were raised to a thousand

dollars a game, and still Carringer won. At last the time came when the stranger braced himself for a final effort. With speech somewhat thick, but very deliberate and quiet, he said:

"You have won seventy-four thousand dollars, which is exactly the amount I have remaining. We have been playing for several hours. I am tired, and I suppose you are. Let us finish the game. You have seventy-four thousand dollars and no more. I have an equal amount and not a cent besides. Each will now stake his all and throw a final game for it."

Without hesitation, Carringer agreed. The hills made a considerable pile on the table. Carringer threw, and the box held but one combination that could possibly heat him; this combination might be thrown once in ten thousand times. The starving man's heart beat violently as the stranger picked up the box with exasperating deliberation. It was a long time before he threw. He made his combinations and ended by defeating his opponent. He sat looking at the dice a long time, and then slowly leaned back in his chair, settled himself comfortably, raised his eyes to Carringer's, and fixed that unearthly stare upon him. He said not a word; his face contained not a trace of emotion or intelligence. He simply looked. One can not keep one's eyes open very long without winking, but the stranger did. He sat so motionless that Carringer began to torture.

"I will go now," he said to the stranger—said that when he had not a cent and was starving.

The stranger made no reply, but did not relax his gaze; and under that gaze the young man shrank back in his own chair, terrified. He became aware that two men were cautiously talking in an adjoining booth. As there was a deathly silence in his own, he listened, and this is what he heard:

"Yes; he was seen to turn into this street about three hours ago."

"And he had shaved?"

"He must have done so; and to remove a full beard would naturally make a great change in a man."

"But it may not have been he."

"True enough; but his extreme pallor attracted attention. You know he has been seriously troubled with heart-disease lately, and it has affected him seriously."

"Yes; but his old skill remains. Why, this is the most daring bank robbery we ever had here. A hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars—think of it! How long has it been since he was let out of Joliet?"

"Eight years. In that time he has grown a beard, and lived by dice-throwing with men who thought they could detect him if he should swindle them; but that is impossible. No human being can come winner out of a game with him."

Then the two men clinked glasses and passed out.

The dice-players—the pale one and the starving one—sat gazing at each other, with a hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars piled up between them. The winner made no move to take in the money; he merely sat and stared at Carringer, wholly unmoved by the conversation in the adjoining room. His imperturbability was amazing, his absolute stillness terrifying.

Carringer began to shake with an ague. The cold, steady gaze of the stranger sent ice into his marrow. Unable to bear longer this unwavering look, Carringer moved to one side, and then he was amazed to discover that the eyes of the pale man, instead of following him, remained fixed upon the spot where he had sat. A great fear seized the young man. He feared to make the slightest sound. Voices of men in the bar-room were audible, and the sufferer imagined that he heard others whispering and tip-toeing in the passage outside his booth. He poured out some absinthe, watching his strange companion all the while, and drank alone and unnoticed. He took a heavy drink, and it had a peculiar effect upon him—he felt his heart bounding with alarming force and rapidity, and breathing was difficult. Still his hunger remained, and that and the absinthe gave him an idea that the gastric acids were destroying him by digesting his stomach. He leaned forward and whispered to the stranger, but was given no attention. One of the man's hands lay upon the table; Carringer placed his upon it, and then drew back in terror—the hand was as cold as a stone.

The money must not lie there exposed. Carringer arranged it into neat parcels, looking furtively every moment at his immovable companion, and in mortal fear that he would stir! Then he sat back and waited. A deadly fascination impelled him to move back into his former position, so as to bring his face directly before the gaze of the stranger. And so the two sat and stared at each other.

Carringer felt his breath coming heavier and his heartbeats growing weaker, but these conditions gave him comfort by reducing his anxiety and softening the pangs of hunger. He was growing more and more comfortable, and yawned. If he had dared he might have gone to sleep.

Suddenly a fierce light flooded his vision and sent him with a bound to his feet. Had he been struck upon the head or stabbed to the heart? No; he was sound and alive. The pale stranger still sat there staring at nothing, and immovable; but Carringer was no longer afraid of him. On the contrary, an extraordinary buoyancy of spirit and elasticity of body made him feel reckless and daring. His former timidity and scruples vanished, and he felt equal to any adventure. Without any hesitation he gathered up the money and bestowed it in his several pockets.

"I am a fool to starve," he said to himself, "with all this money ready to my hand."

As cautiously as thief he unlocked the door, stepped out, reclosed it, and boldly and with head erect stalked out upon the street. Much to his astonishment, he found the city in the bustle of the early evening, yet the sky was clear. It was evident to him that he had not been in the saloon as long as he had supposed. He walked along the street with the utmost unconcern of the dangers that beset him, and laughed softly but gleefully. Would he not eat now—ah, would he not? Why, he could buy a dozen restaurants! Not only that, but he would hunt the city up and down for

hungry men, and feed them with the fattest steaks, the juiciest roasts, and the biggest oysters that the town could supply. As for himself, he must eat first; after that he would set up a great establishment for feeding other hungry mortals without charge. Yes, he would eat first; if he pleased, he would eat till he should burst. In what single place could he find sufficient to satisfy his hunger? Could he live long enough to have an ox killed and roasted whole for his supper? Besides an ox he would order two dozen broiled chickens, fifty dozen oysters, a dozen crabs, ten dozen eggs, ten hams, eight young pigs, twenty wild ducks, fifteen fish of four different kinds, eight salads, four dozen bottles each of claret, burgundy, and champagne; for pastry, eight plum-puddings, and for dessert, bushels of nuts, ices, and confections. It would require time to prepare such a meal, and if he could only live until it could be made ready, it would be infinitely better than to spoil his appetite with a dozen or two meals of ordinary size. He thought he could live that long, for he felt amazingly strong and bright. Never in his life before had he walked with so great ease and lightness; his feet hardly touched the ground—he ran and leaped. It did him good to tantalize his hunger, for that would make his relish of the feast all the keener. Oh, but how they would stare when he would give his order, and how comically they would hang back, and how amazed they would be when he would throw a few thousand dollars on the counter and tell them to take their money out of it and keep the change! Really, it was worth while to be so hungry as that, for then eating became such an unspeakable luxury. And one must not be in too great a hurry to eat when one is so hungry—that is beastly. How much of the joy of living do rich people miss from eating before they are hungry—before they have gone three days and nights without food! And how manly it is, and how great self-control it shows, to dally with starvation when one has a dazzling fortune in one's pocket and every restaurant has an open door! To be hungry without money—that is despair; to be starving with a bursting pocket—that is sublime! Surely the only true heaven is that in which one famishes in the presence of abundant food, which he might have for the taking, and then a gorged stomach and a long sleep.

The starving wretch, speculating thus, still kept from food. He felt himself growing in stature, and the people whom he met became pygmies. The streets widened, the stars became suns and dimmed the electric lights, and the most intoxicating odors and the sweetest music filled the air. Shouting, laughing, and singing, Carringer joined in the great chorus that swept over the city, and then—

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The two detectives who had traced the famous bank robber to the saloon in Mason Street, where Carringer had encountered the stranger of the pallid face, left the saloon; but, unable to pursue the trail further, had finally returned. They found the door of booth No. 7 locked. After rapping and calling, and receiving no answer, they burst open the door, and there they saw two men—one of middle age and the other very young—sitting perfectly still, and in the strangest manner imaginable staring at each other across the table. Between them was a great pile of money, arranged neatly in parcels. Near at hand were an empty absinthe bottle, a water-pitcher, glasses, and a dice-box, with the dice lying before the elder man as he had thrown them last. One of the detectives covered the elder man with a revolver and commanded:

"Throw up your hands!"

But the dice-thrower paid no attention. The detectives exchanged startled glances. They looked closer into the faces of the two men, and then they discovered that both were dead.

W. C. MORROW.

SAN FRANCISCO, December, 1892.

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A young notary of Bakhmont, Russia, fell in love with a lady's maid and arranged to marry her. His parents opposed the marriage, and the young couple determined to die together. The young man fired a bullet from a revolver into his sweetheart's body and then turned the weapon on himself. Both were badly wounded, but neither fatally, and, after spending three months in the same hospital, they came out recently and were promptly married. The story had become known and an enormous crowd attended the wedding.

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Being high sheriff of an English county, as many lords and rich men are, is no joke. The judge of the Winchester assizes discovered, when opening court, that the high sheriff, Sir Henry Tichborne, had absented himself "without permission asked, and gone, without excuse, explanation, or justification," for a six months' trip in Africa. The judge fined him five hundred guineas.

Herbert Spencer has been writing for more than forty years, and a partial estimate of the profits from the sale of his most important books shows that they have brought him less than five thousand dollars a year. Decidedly philosophy does not pay the philosopher in cash, whatever it may give him in intellectual satisfaction.

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Among the candidates nominated for the coming elections by the French women suffragists are Mme. Jarrettout, a tailor's assistant, who was decorated with the Legion of Honor for bravery on the battle-field, several sculptors, painters, and journalists, and Mme. Bernhardt, the actress. Most of them have accepted.

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A street dialogue from the *Courrier des Etats-Unis*: "Do you see that gentleman? He has dried many a tear." "What a good heart he must have! Do tell me who he is." "He is a man who sells handkerchiefs."

Rutgers Female College has recently established a course of journalism.

LONDON'S LATEST CRAZE.

The Scramble for Shillings in Missing Word Competitions.

Not London alone, but all England has gone mad over the "missing word" competitions certain weekly newspaper proprietors have set on foot, to their own great advantage and the contingent profit of certain of their readers. Already the final *cachet* of advertising ingenuity has been set upon the craze, and the question of its legality or illegality has been raised in the courts, bidding fair to become a *cause célèbre* of a minor degree. But, you are asking me, what is a "missing word" competition? Its very simplicity gives it a chief element of popularity. In one of the columns of those many popular weeklies, which, with mushroom growth, have during the last three years covered the land, and concerning whose genesis I shall have something to say later on, there appears a paragraph of the most ordinary and commonplace description, save that in place of one word appears a dash (—). Below this mutilated piece of literature is printed a "coupon," with spaces for the name and address of the competitor, and another space, wherein he is to insert the word which, in his judgment, will most fittingly take the place of the blank in the sentence above. Having filled in this coupon, the misguided youth or maid purchases a postal-order for one shilling, and, inclosing with it the filled-in coupon, posts it to the editor of the periodical. The theory is that all the shillings, without any deduction (save in some cases a half-penny in each shilling which is devoted to some charitable object), are divided equally among those who have guessed aright. Marvelous as it may seem, no less a sum than ninety-six pounds odd was received the other day by each of the successful guessers in one of these competitions. The scheme was started by one of these penny-dollops of fourth-rate literature, which, as I have hinted, are crowding from the hook-stalls all forms of more reputable journalism, in order to hoist its circulation. So well did it succeed in this laudable object that its rivals quickly followed suit, and before one could say "Jack Robinson!" the whole town was ablaze with enthusiasm for this new form of gambling. That it is nothing more nor less than a gamble, is very evident. Though the sentences are apparently culled at haphazard and the word left out at an apparent venture, it is very evident that every endeavor is made to provide a space into which any one of a score of words or more may fit. The average sum which falls to each successful competitor, I fancy, averages not more than a pound or two, and thus the odds are pretty nearly even. You are betting a shilling, or rather thirteen pence half-penny (for the coupon costs a penny and the postal-order a half-penny), against a problematical pound or two, while your chances of being correct are less than one in twenty. Some papers, it is true, even this up to some extent by giving you two chances for your shilling, but even then the ratios of gain to losses increase in equal proportion, so that the sums into which the pool is eventually divided are proportionately smaller. Be this as it may, one sees the orange, or red, or green covers of the journals in question in the hands of every one. One can not enter a railway-carriage, especially if it be one devoted to smokers, without hearing youths and gray-heards gravely discussing the question as to whether this word or that is more likely to supply the missing verbal link. At the bars, the slim-waisted, broad-shouldered young women, who supply us with Scotch whisky and soda, wheedle their callow admirers into supplying them with the requisite sections of Webster's *Unabridged* and the postal notes which will enable them to take part in the lottery. Stunted office-boys deny themselves their beloved packets of Sweet Caporal cigarettes, or make stealthy raids upon the stamp-drawer for the pennies which contribute to modest "pools," and squabble intermittently between themselves as to the word upon which the joint capital is to be staked. Even clubdom has been invaded by the pest; and only this morning I saw an elderly bore, who is one of the fixtures of my own club smoking-room, furtively slipping a postal-order into an envelope. But I caught sight of the tell-tale coupon, and, as he caught my withering glance (at least it was meant to be withering, but, perhaps, it was only impudent) he visibly blushed and quailed. That the efforts of the public prosecutor, which have already resulted in the appearance at a police court of the proprietor of one of these rags, will be successful, no right-minded person can fail to hope.

And what manner of publications, it may be asked, are those which resort to means like this to boom their circulation? They are a sign, and a pregnant one, of the times. A dozen years ago or so, a commercial traveler who had, without success, tried one scheme after another whereby he might amass more wealth than could be made "on the road," conceived an idea which seemed to his friends to have rather less in it than some of those former ones which had brought him to anterior grief. His plan was to publish a penny weekly paper which should consist entirely of clippings from other papers, chiefly (in view of a stringent English copyright law) of American origin. The original scheme also included the publication of excerpts from English "classical" writers. He managed to get the necessary capital, and, in Manchester, his weekly output of "conveyed" matter took place. The title he chose, *Tit-Bits*, proved a lucky one, for it had a suggestion of forbidden fruit about it, which proved appealing to a certain section of the public. The matter, which was liberally dosed with witticisms from *Puck* and other American humorous publications, proved about on the level of English middle-class understanding, and Mr. Newnes woke up one morning to find himself the owner of a paper so promising that its offices were moved to London. To-day he is a millionaire, a member of Parliament, and the owner not only of *Tit-Bits*, but of the *Strand Magazine*, a scarcely less valuable property. I say the "owner" advisedly, for though, nominally, the concern has been turned into a limited liability company, Newnes, to all intents and purposes, carries it in his waistcoat-pocket. But it re-

quired work and ingenuity, not only on the proprietor's part, but on that of the staff he gradually gathered round him, to place *Tit-Bits* on the pinnacle of its popularity; and one day some of these clever young men thought they would like to make some money for themselves. They accordingly started an opposition paper, conducted on much the same lines, and entitled, for some mysterious reason, *Answers*. This not only succeeded beyond their utmost expectations, but seemed rather to help than to hurt its progenitor. Then it became apparent that a vast section of the public had been reached by periodical literature which, prior to this time, had been deaf to all appeals. Their appetite grew on what it fed upon, and there were not wanting those who recognized this fact to their own advantage. Weekly sheets, which avowedly were conducted on the same lines as *Answers* and *Tit-Bits*, sprang up like magic in every direction. Some of them, and one notably which was conducted by Archibald Grove, M. P., editor of the *New Review*, tried to improve the standard set by the antitype, and suffered extinction for their folly; others were conducted on lines diametrically opposite, and also came to grief, to the satisfaction of all not immediately concerned; but a fair percentage thrived and waxed fat, and to-day there are four or five of these specimens of what I can only term "electro-plated" periodical literature, whose circulations severally run into the hundreds of thousands. It is as I say, a sign of the times, nor is it altogether a satisfactory one. Nothing the mind of man can conceive is more opposed to poor Mat Arnold's pet phrase of "sweetness and light," a phrase which, for all its affectation, embodies an eternal truth, than these ill-printed, spongy-papered bundles of undigested information and uncouth mediocrity. When one reflects on the literary taste of a generation which can eagerly assimilate these and those like unto these, one is saved from a fit of the horrors only by the counter reflection that, perhaps, electro-plate is better than nothing at all, and may lead up to the desire for solid silver. And the truth is that the class which reads *Tit-Bits*, *Answers*, and *Pearson's Weekly*, ten years ago read nothing at all but the *Police News*. At the same time, when that apotheosis of the literary hack—trying to masquerade as a man of letters—Mr. Grant Allen, deliberately wrote himself down, as he did lately in the *Nineteenth Century*—or was it the *Contemporary*?—as an admirer of this sort of stuff, one wonders whether he is in possession of such modicum of sense as it has pleased the Almighty to bestow upon him, or whether his judgment is hemmed by the fact that Mr. Newnes paid him one thousand pounds for a bad sensational novel.

PICCADILLY.

LONDON, December 3, 1892.

INDIVIDUALITIES.

President Eliot, of Harvard University, is a member of the Cremation Society, in Boston, and advocates the objects of the organization.

Captain Bassett, who has just completed sixty-one years of service in the United States Senate, keeps his snuff in a box that was given him by Daniel Webster.

Professor Huxley now lives in a house in Sussex designed for him by the husband of his eldest daughter. He calls the place "Hodeslea," which is the ancient form of his surname.

Louis Kossuth is again reported to be dying, and his illness is this time of so grave a character as to make it unlikely that his feeble strength can combat it. The aged hero of Hungarian independence is past ninety, and for many years he has lived an exile in Turin. His home there has been in a mediæval palace, now in a state of dilapidation, and he has practically secluded himself among his books.

During his four years' occupancy of the White House, Mr. Harrison received a salary of \$200,000, and it is computed that of that amount he spent only \$94,000 in living and general expenses, including the purchase of his Cape May cottage. If these figures, which are from a Republican source, are correct, the President will return to Indianapolis richer by \$106,000 than when he left that city for Washington.

The approaching marriage of young Lord Sudley to the widow Sherman is all the talk just now in London society. This union will not take place if Count Arran, his lordship's father, can prevent it. His son is just the age of the widow Sherman's daughter. There have been several such alliances in England, notably that of the Dowager Duchess of Montrose, who, at the age of seventy-five, was wedded for the third time, and to Mr. Marcus Henry Milner, aged twenty-five; and the well-remembered one of Lady Burdett-Coutts, who, at sixty-seven, married Mr. W. L. Ashmead Bartlett, who was then twenty-eight.

Edmund Yates says, in the *World of London*: Baron Hirsch's brother-in-law, Senator Montefiore-Levi, who presides very ably over the Brussels Monetary Conference, hit on a novel and most successful mode of entertaining his fellow-commissioners. He rented the Parc Theatre, one evening, engaged Coquelin Aimé and his troupe from Paris to play the "Taming of the Shrew," and decorated the whole of the house with palms, orchids, and hot-house flowers. Such a brilliant scene has not been witnessed in Brussels within the memory of the present generation. The fine *fleur* of Belgian society mustered in full force; but no prettier toilets were to be seen than those worn by Mrs. Jones, of Nevada, Mrs. McCreary, of Kentucky, Lady Lily Greene, Lady Winefield Cary-Elwes, Mrs. Andrews, Mrs. Adam, and Mrs. Clay-Kerr-Seymer. Among the English and American guests present were Senators Jones and Allison, Mr. James McCreary, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Dana Horton, Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Sir C. Fremantle, and Mr. Bertram Currie. The display of diamonds was only equaled by the display of old lace. Every lady received on entering a bouquet of orchids and a satin bag of bonbons.